

GENERAL SYNOD 2010

RESOLUTIONS FORM

Resolution Number A142 –R1

Subject Solemnization of Marriage

Moved by The Reverend Greg Gilson, Diocese of Caledonia

Seconded by The Right Reverend Greg Kerr-Wilson, Diocese of Qu'Appelle

Be it resolved that this General Synod:

Request the Council of General Synod

1. to direct a study of the canonical, theological and liturgical implications, as well as the potential effects on the mission and witness of the Anglican Church of Canada, of the cessation of the solemnization of matrimony by the clergy of the Anglican Church of Canada and of the adoption of the European model of blessing those civil marriages that conform to a canonical definition of marriage as the normative practice of the Church; and
2. to report the findings of this study to the General Synod in 2013.

Source Faith, Worship and Ministry

Submitted by Janet Marshall

Does this motion contain within it any financial implications? Yes No

If yes, has the General Synod Expenditures Committee considered the implications? Yes No

EXPLANATORY NOTE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee is proposing a study of the implications of the adoption by The Anglican Church of Canada of the practice of many churches throughout the world where the blessing of a marriage only occurs after the couple has obtained a civil marriage.

This is not a new question in the life of the Christian community. The role of a presbyter or a bishop in marriage evolved from offering a blessing upon a couple who had married according to the cultural customs of their community to our present practice where the presbyter or bishop acts as an agent of the state as well as offering the church's blessing. This contemporary practice is one of the continuing vestiges of the fusion of church and state that began as Christianity assumed its place as the state religion of the Roman Empire, east and west. This role continued even after the Reformation. As the Church of England spread throughout the world, clergy continued to officiate at marriages as agents of the state even as they also practiced their original role as agents of the church who pronounced a blessing upon the couple. In various countries the separation of church and state, as well as places where Christianity had no protected status in the state, led to the practice of requiring a civil marriage before the celebration of the marriage in the church.

The Committee is proposing that a study be undertaken to determine what the implications would be for our church if we were to authorize clergy only to bless the marriages of those who had already obtained a civil marriage. We understand this to be a part of the overall task of discerning the role of the church in marriage in the twenty-first century.